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Referred to: RADM Jonathan White

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Rule XIV. *Records*

(a) *Keeping of Records.*—The Committee shall keep a complete record of all Committee action which shall include—

- (1) In the case of any meeting or hearing transcripts, a **substantially verbatim** account of remarks actually made during the proceedings, subject only to technical, grammatical, and typographical corrections authorized by the person making the remarks involved...

[Emphasis added].

263 Admiral WHITE. Good morning, Mr. Chairman. First of
264 all, good morning, Chairman Hunter; good morning, Ranking
265 Member Garamendi; good morning, other subcommittee members.
266 My name is Rear Admiral Jonathan White, and I currently
267 serve, as mentioned, as the oceanographer and navigator of
268 the Navy, and as the lead of the Navy's Task Force Climate
269 Change. I have submitted my full written statement to the
270 committee. I ask that it be made part of the hearing record.
271 And, with your permission, I will give a brief opening
272 statement.

273 I join my colleagues in supporting the President's
274 National Strategy for the Arctic Region, and appreciate the
275 opportunity to discuss the Navy's preparations in
276 implementing U.S. policy in the Arctic. The Arctic Ocean is
277 experiencing significant change in its seasonal ice coverage,
278 which is making it more accessible to maritime activity. The
279 diminishing sea ice is slowly opening the region to increased
280 commercial activity and shipping.

281 As the maritime domain, the Navy has responsibilities in
282 the Arctic. In support of the U.S. National Strategy for the
283 Arctic Region and the Department of the Defense Arctic
284 Strategy, the Navy has identified four strategy objectives:
285 ensure U.S. Arctic sovereignty; provide ready naval forces;
286 to preserve freedom of the seas; and promote partnerships.

287 We acknowledge that the risk of conflict in the region

288 is currently low. The Arctic Council and other diplomatic
289 venues provide effective means to resolve disputes between
290 nations. However, the U.S. Navy must be ready to operate in
291 this challenging environment, just as it does routinely on,
292 under, and above every other ocean.

293 History shows us that the presence of navies on the
294 world's oceans provides security and stability that promote
295 economic development and commerce. As President Theodore
296 Roosevelt stated over 110 years ago, "A good navy is not a
297 provocation to war, it is the surest guarantee of peace."

298 The Navy's existing posture is appropriate to address
299 the near-term defense requirements in the Arctic, primarily
300 through under-sea assets. For the Navy to develop the full
301 range of capabilities it has in other oceans will take time.

302 This past February, the chief of naval operations,
303 Admiral Jonathan Greenert, signed the U.S. Navy Arctic Road
304 Map 2014 - 2030, which aligns with the National Arctic
305 Strategy and the U.S. Coast Guard Arctic Strategy. It
306 includes a detailed Implementation Plan to develop Arctic
307 capabilities and capacity in step with the changing
308 environment.

309 Over the next decade, the Navy will continue to develop
310 capabilities and experience, largely through personal
311 exchanges and exercises in the high latitudes, and primarily
312 in the open water during the summer season. We will also

313 continue to conduct research to better understand and predict
314 the complex Arctic environment and how it relates to safe and
315 effective naval operations.

316 Our challenge over the coming decade will be to balance
317 the resource demands of current requirements with investments
318 in the development of future capabilities. To accomplish
319 this, the Navy will emphasis low-cost, long lead-time
320 activities, and use partnerships to ensure we do this in
321 cost-effective and smart ways. Over the course of the next
322 few years, the Navy will continue to leverage strong
323 partnerships with the U.S. Coast Guard and other national and
324 international Arctic partners and stakeholders to
325 cooperatively address the challenges of Arctic operation.

326 These challenges are substantial, the Arctic Ocean is a
327 vast and remote frontier with little shore infrastructure to
328 support operations, frequent extreme hazardous wind and sea
329 conditions, very limited navigation aids, dated and
330 unreliable navigation charts, and limited communications. By
331 the mid-2020's, we predict the summer sea ice will diminish
332 to the point of opening a near-polar deepwater transit route
333 across the Arctic for at least several days during the late
334 summer.

335 As commercial enterprise in the Arctic slowly increase
336 during this period, new mission requirements for the Navy
337 will likely be to assist the Coast Guard and other nations

338 with search and rescue or disaster response. But we may also
339 be called upon to ensure freedom of navigation in Arctic
340 waters. We will continue to transition toward the capability
341 to operate on and above the sea for sustained periods, as
342 required.

343 By 2030, the Navy looks to have the necessary trained
344 and equipped personnel, along with surface, subsurface, and
345 air capabilities to respond to contingencies and emergencies
346 affecting national security in the Arctic. The U.S. Navy must
347 be prepared to sail on to distant and remote waters to
348 protect national interests and freedom of the seas.

349 We are confronted today by the prospect of a newly
350 accessible ocean, one that presents significantly more
351 challenges than other maritime regions. Fortunately, we have
352 time to prepare. We have made significant progress in
353 understanding those challenges, and preparing the Navy for
354 success. The key, again, will be to balance potential
355 investments with other service priorities. But we are moving
356 forward with a flexible approach, and we know we can keep
357 pace with the evolving Arctic region, as we protect our
358 national security interests.

359 Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Garamendi and
360 committee members, for the opportunity to appear before you
361 today. This concludes my oral statement, and I look forward
362 to your questions. *end*

365 Mr. HUNTER. Thanks, Admiral. They have a nickname in
366 the Navy for the Navigator of the Navy? I mean, do you have
367 a nickname? They call you ``Nav'' or anything?

368 Admiral WHITE. The best job and title for a flag officer
369 in the Navy, sir, in my opinion. (end)

370 [Laughter.]

371 Mr. HUNTER. That is great. ``The Navigator.''

372 Admiral WHITE. The Navigator would be better. (end)

373 Mr. HUNTER. Ambassador Balton, you are recognized.

522 northwest coast of Alaska to attempt to continue its drilling
523 operations that it started back in the summer of 2012.

524 So, it is purely from an operational standpoint that we
525 see the importance of it, and we articulated that. That is
526 why we put out an Arctic Strategy. We really wanted to make
527 it clear that, despite the challenges associated with the
528 resourcing of Arctic needs, the demand for presence won't go
529 away. And, as I said, as other nations--whether we
530 ultimately develop much off of our own Arctic coast, the
531 development that is existing elsewhere in the Arctic, and the
532 stuff that I have seen going on through my travels, tells me
533 that we are going to want to pay attention to it.

534 Mr. HUNTER. Thanks. Admiral White, when is the Navy
535 going to put forward funds for an icebreaker, if it is so
536 important?

537 Admiral WHITE. Sir, we view--and since the mid-1960s,
538 icebreaking has been a Coast Guard mission. We support the
539 Coast Guard's strategy and their requirements for icebreaking
540 for the Arctic and anywhere else that it may be needed. We
541 rely on them, we support them. We are working very closely
542 with them in an integrated planning team-- (end)

543 Mr. HUNTER. You support them with money?

544 Admiral WHITE.--requirements. (end)

545 Mr. HUNTER. You support them with money?

546 Admiral WHITE. We do not support them with part of our

547 | budget, sir. They were given the mission, we are a
548 | mission-funded organization. And so, we rely on them. But
549 | we support them totally with the requirements. We work hand
550 | in hand, whether it is icebreakers or maybe aircraft carriers
551 | or landing ships. It is a team approach that we do to all
552 | the operations that we are involved in together. But
553 | icebreaking was given to the Coast Guard, and we are in full
554 | support of them. end

555 | Mr. BALTON. So, unlike my colleagues, the mission of my
556 | agency is a little bit different. The Department of State
557 | has as its mission to carry out U.S. foreign policy. We
558 | don't break ice, we don't operate at sea.

559 | That said, I agree with you, that--with respect to the
560 | importance of having icebreaking capability in the Arctic and
561 | Antarctic, including for our foreign policy and our presence.

562 | But I would not agree that is the only measure of the
563 | importance of the Arctic to our nation. There is a lot going
564 | on in the Arctic. The icebreaking issue is only one facet of
565 | many.

566 | Mr. HUNTER. As I have got 13 seconds left, let me ask
567 | this. Does the Navy have a national security requirement for
568 | a heavy icebreaker in the Arctic? Yes or no?

569 | Admiral WHITE. The Navy has a requirement for
570 | icebreaking to support assured access in the Arctic,
571 | as--under the Coast Guard--agreement with the Coast Guard,

572 that they will do the icebreaking for us. Right now we have
573 no requirement to build--for the U.S. Navy to build an
574 icebreaker for the Arctic, and we rely on the Coast Guard's
575 capability to break ice. They are meeting the requirements
576 that we have in the near term, and we fully support that,
577 sir. (end)

578 Mr. HUNTER. All right, thank you. Mr. Garamendi is
579 recognized.

580 Mr. GARAMENDI. Just very quickly on this, the number
581 that I have heard for a new icebreaker is somewhere in the
582 half-a-billion dollar range. And I would just tell all of us
583 that are on the Armed Services Committee that we expect to
584 spend, in the next 10 years, some \$15 billion rebuilding the
585 B61 bomb that nobody knows what to do with.

586 So, we have choices, and we ought to look to ourselves
587 about the choices we make. We are committed to that 15
588 billion. We could take half-a-dozen of those unnecessary,
589 unused bombs, and build a icebreaker. These are our choices.
590 Responsibility really does lie here.

591 Enough of that. I want to hit the Law of the Sea. Mr.
592 Ambassador, you spoke quickly to that issue. I would like
593 you to expand upon it, and really why it is important. And
594 also, why, in your view, it has not yet passed the Senate, so
595 we can blame them, rather than us, on this one.

596 [Laughter.]

722 But when I was in the Coast Guard, we referred to the Navy as
723 the "Big Outfit." So what does the Big Outfit say in
724 response to my question?

725 Admiral WHITE. And I hope the Big Outfit doesn't mean we
726 are the fattened calf to pay for icebreakers, sir, but thank
727 you for the opportunity.

728 We are larger. We certainly have large force structure.

729 But our force structure is designed to meet the mission
730 requirements for national security and defense, as outlined.

731 These are very austere budget times. We are faced with
732 challenges, in terms of replacing our SSBN force in the
733 future: aircraft carriers, an aging fleet of other surface
734 combatants, submarines and aircraft. We have no plan to
735 build an icebreaker. We have no mission for icebreaking.
736 Therefore, we see the great partnership that I know you are
737 aware between Navy and Coast Guard, sir, as the means by
738 which we will rely on the Coast Guard for that mission, as it
739 stands right now. We are happy with that, and we are happy
740 with the Coast Guard's assessment on how they are going to
741 meet those mission requirements in the future, sir. end

742 Mr. COBLE. Ambassador, you mentioned that there are
743 other issues in the Arctic, in addition to the Coast Guard
744 icebreaker issue. Are any of those other issues as pressing
745 for resolution as is the icebreaker issue? That may be
746 subject to personal interpretation.

822 | you tell--give me a sense, and the subcommittee a sense of
823 | how the Navy was engaged in the construction of our last
824 | icebreaker, the Healy? About 1990-ish.

825 | Admiral WHITE. Yes, sir. In the 1980s, Congress
826 | provided the funding that had been set aside to build Healy
827 | to the Navy to run the acquisition program. Then, in the
828 | building of Healy, it was a team effort. So the program
829 | management and the actual building, outfitting, transition of
830 | operations, was a Coast Guard/Navy partnership approach. But
831 | it was purely because the funding was put into our
832 | shipbuilding coffers, not out of hide, as it were, to do
833 | that, sir. end

834 | Mr. LARSEN. So it was a separate dollar amount, and it
835 | was part of the overall shipbuilding account, set aside
836 | within the Navy shipbuilding account?

837 | Admiral WHITE. Yes, sir. end

838 | Mr. LARSEN. Is that how that worked? Okay, yes. Admiral
839 | Neffenger, any comment on that?

840 | Admiral NEFFENGER. I think he is accurate on that score.
841 | I don't--I wasn't involved in that--

842 | Mr. LARSEN. Sure.

843 | Admiral NEFFENGER.--at that time, with the details on
844 | that. But I do know that the money was given to the Navy
845 | shipbuilding account at the time, and we leveraged the
846 | capabilities of NAVSEA and Navy acquisition professionals to

1147 So, you always want that capability. But I would agree
1148 with you, that you want to reduce the requirements and
1149 descope them as much as possible, so that what you have is a
1150 purpose-built, heavy icebreaker that can conduct the basis
1151 round of Coast Guard missions.

1152 Mr. HUNTER. Thank you.

1153 Mr. Garamendi?

1154 Mr. GARAMENDI. Just quickly, I think for all of us on
1155 this side of the panel, the Healy gives us an opportunity and
1156 a thought process on how it might be done. Money in the
1157 defense budget was used to build the Healy through the Navy,
1158 a process that we should take a look at, if we are serious
1159 about having a new heavy icebreaker.

1160 I want to go back to the Northern Sea Route. We were
1161 discussing that issue. It seems to me to be one that we need
1162 to understand, relationships with Russia and the rest.
1163 Admiral White, you were going to take up that issue.

1164 Admiral WHITE. Yes, sir, Ranking Member Garamendi, thank
1165 you.

1166 The Northern Sea Route represents the most navigable sea
1167 route that is open for certain periods of time during the
1168 late summer during the ice minimum in the Arctic. We
1169 anticipate, by the mid-2020s, that it will be ice free,
1170 which, under international definition, means less than 10
1171 percent ice coverage, for up to 6 weeks per year. That

1172 represents significant amount of transit across that passage,
1173 even without necessarily having to have an icebreaker.

1174 We look at the Northern Sea Route, and especially the
1175 entrance to it through the Bering Strait, as a strategic
1176 crossroads that we are concerned about, just like we are all
1177 those crossroads, this one especially because we own part of
1178 that strategic crossroads. So, as we monitor what is
1179 happening in the Northern Sea Route, we do so from a national
1180 security perspective, but also understanding that the way
1181 that these routes unfold in the Arctic, we anticipate that
1182 they will do so peacefully, with low risk of conflict. We
1183 have no anticipation of that.

1184 We also, as I mentioned, are looking for a deepwater
1185 route to start opening up in the mid-2020 time frame, which
1186 would be near the pole, and would provide another
1187 alternative, although it would unfold and open up more
1188 slowly, certainly, than the Northern Sea Route. But all
1189 these routes are going to change the way that the Arctic is
1190 looked at, and we are monitoring them closely, as we watch
1191 our missions evolve, sir. *(end)*

1192 Mr. GARAMENDI. Thank you.

1193 Mr. BALTON. Thank you, sir. I don't have much to add.
1194 You suggested that relations with Russia are problematic;
1195 that is certainly so. However, our nations do have common
1196 interests in the Arctic, and one of them is to prevent or

1222 | breath as you began.

1223 | [Laughter.]

1224 | Mr. GARAMENDI. So finish, and then the admiral--

1225 | Mr. BALTON. No, I was just trying to recall what I had
1226 | heard about that. But the answer is yes.

1227 | Mr. GARAMENDI. Admiral, anything to add?

1228 | Admiral WHITE. With the qualifier the ambassador put in,
1229 | I agree. The Russians are very careful, in that
1230 | they--certain ships going through there must be escorted
1231 | during certain parts, because of the concerns with navigating
1232 | safely, the hazardous conditions that are involved, and some
1233 | of these choke point areas going through the Northern Sea
1234 | Route. So they do also require that vessels meet a certain
1235 | limit through the Polar Code and other requirements, in terms
1236 | of the ship's ability to maintain and sustain itself in going
1237 | through those passages.

1238 | So, it is open with conditions, I think, is the best way
1239 | to say it, sir. end

1240 | Mr. GARAMENDI. Very good. I have completed my questions
1241 | on this particular panel. So I will yield back what time
1242 | there is. Thank you.

1243 | Mr. HUNTER. I thank the ranking member. Mr. Sanford is
1244 | recognized.

1245 | Mr. SANFORD. I don't want to be a broken record, but I
1246 | do want to follow up on what Chairman Young was saying, which

1322 Mr. LARSEN. Okay, thanks. And for Admiral White, I will
1323 just--I will follow up with you later about the Navy Arctic
1324 Road Map. We are--my office is taking a look at that in a
1325 little more detail, but I will just follow up with you
1326 specifically on that later.

1327 Admiral WHITE. Yes, sir. end
1328 Mr. LARSEN. Yes. Thank you very much.

1329 Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yield back.

1330 Mr. HUNTER. Thank the gentleman. Unless Mr. Garamendi
1331 has more questions--

1332 Mr. GARAMENDI. Just a quick question. A lot of the
1333 icebreaking activities would seem to benefit commerce,
1334 specific ships that may want to go from here to there. Can
1335 you charge for the services, breaking the ice so the ship can
1336 pass or get unstuck?

1337 Admiral NEFFENGER. Well, I suppose the best example
1338 would be, if you look at the Great Lakes icebreaking mission
1339 that we have, we do not charge for those services.
1340 And--although, what we have done there is develop a tiered
1341 approach to it. We keep the major arteries open, for lack of
1342 a better description, and then we leave it to commercial
1343 icebreaking services and those contracted for--to open up the
1344 entrances into the ports and the small harbors.

1345 We used to do it all, but over the course of the last
1346 six or seven years we have really changed that, and trying to